

Norumbega Territory on Mercator Map, 1569

**King Arthur's Colony at Norumbega
—Newport, Rhode Island
& Queen Margaret's Colony in the 14th Century**

—also—

**Early Maps of Narragansett Bay & Cape Cod – 1414 & 1507
by Gunnar Thompson, Ph.D.**

Summary

Mercator's World Map of 1569 included the legendary City of "Norumbega." Mercator believed it was the site of King Arthur's Capital City that was established with a Welsh Colony in the 6th century. *Nor-bega* simply means: "North Settlement."

Placement of this "lost city" beside Narragansett Bay has haunted historians for centuries. Equally baffling is the French decision to ignore a 1524 reconnaissance by Giovanni Verrazano. He described the "Bay of Refuge" as the ideal location for a colony. Newly identified cartographic evidence indicates that Cape Cod and Narragansett Bay were charted on a 14th century map that John Ruysch copied and published in 1507. Historians believe this document is absolutely authentic. They completely overlooked the early map of Narragansett Bay and Cape Cod – due to the prevailing assumption (or academic Paradigm) that nobody sailed to the New World ahead of Columbus.

On the contrary: ruins of a Norse-Scottish limekiln that the author identified at Newport reveal that Scandinavian immigrants occupied this strategic harbor during the 14th century. Thus, Jacques Cartier was forced to bypass "New England." He established the first French Colony along the shores of the Gulf of St. Lawrence in frigid Canada.

Although Giovanni Verrazano reported seeing “Natives inclined towards whiteness” at Narragansett Bay, Spanish slavers raided the settlement shortly thereafter. Even so, some of the “White Natives” survived; and they aided subsequent explorers and European immigrants. They served as a “Cultural Bridgehead” for 17th century Pilgrims.

Introduction

Gerhard Mercator’s 1569 Map was a cartographical “game-changer.” His maps used constant-bearing latitudes and meridians that greatly facilitated maritime navigation. Standardized maps based on the “Mercator Projection” enabled navigators to guide voyages across the broad oceans by means of compass and celestial bearings.

Mercator’s most-dubious contribution to the advancement of geography was his placement of a European City called “Norombega” right beside the Grand River along the Eastern Seaboard of North America. Scholars have subsequently identified the mysterious inlet from the North Atlantic Ocean as being “Narragansett Bay.” The Grand River leading northwards to the interior of Upstate New York was intended to represent the modern-day Hudson River. Actually, Narragansett Bay and the Hudson are not connected. That geographical blunder was the least of Mercator’s problems. His incredible notion that *Norombega* City was the capital of an ancient European colony has completely baffled historians.

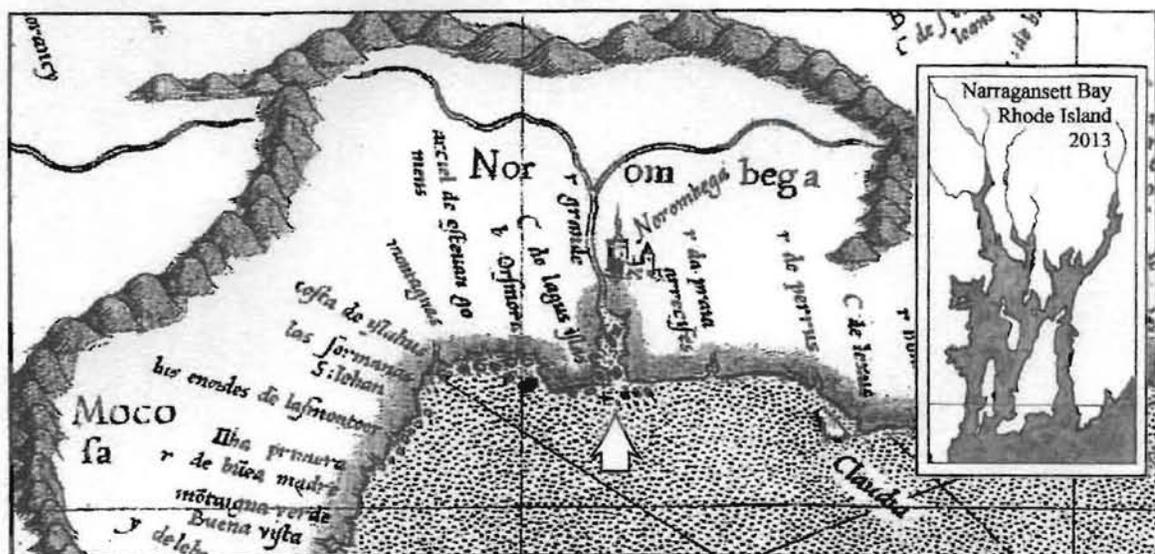


Figure 1. Norombega City and Territory on Mercator’s 1569 World Map. Placement on the Horizontal coastline between Hudson River and Cape Cod (*C de Lexus*), title of adjacent cape – *Lagus Islas* – and trapezoidal-shape serve to identify Narragansett Bay (Rhode Island) as the site of King Arthur’s Capital. Inset showing modern map indicates a high-degree of accuracy and similarity that was not achieved by known Dutch navigators for the next century.

Early French & English Explorations

Initially, French geographers identified Giovanni Verrazano's "Bay of Refuge" as the perfect site for a colony. However, after Jacques Cartier's "advance team" visited the shores of Narragansett Bay, he abandoned the idea of establishing a colony in this region; and he sailed on instead towards the cooler, less-desirable shores of Quebec.

Why the "flip-flop" in French policy? Did the ruins of an English colony on the shores of Narragansett Bay dampen Cartier's enthusiasm?

English explorer John Cabot sailed along the Eastern Seaboard in 1497. He returned again in 1498. None of his navigational charts survived – largely because the mariner failed to return from his second expedition. Cabot was followed by six captains appointed by Henry VII in rapid succession. Richard Warde and Thomas Ashurst of Bristol sailed in 1501. João Fernandez and João Gonzales of the Azores sailed later that year; and Frances Fernandez with John Gonzales followed in 1502.¹ English expeditions might have been searching for Cabot; or they might have been sent to find a "lost" English colony that was already known to mariners from Bristol.²

According to the Bristol Chronicle, merchants from that City had been sending two or more ships west across the Atlantic Ocean every year since 1480. Their objective was identified as the missing "Isle of Brasil." The Chronicle reported that none of the expeditions had been successful; but that assessment might have been an excuse to conceal valuable commercial secrets. As we shall see in a moment, another mariner from Bristol produced an early map of Narragansett Bay; and John Dee, Queen Elizabeth's Chief Geographer, later claimed in 1580 that Norombega (and the surrounding territory of Narragansett Bay) belonged to a mysterious "British Empire of the North."

Was Cabot sent to find something else besides a shortcut to Marco Polo's Cathay?

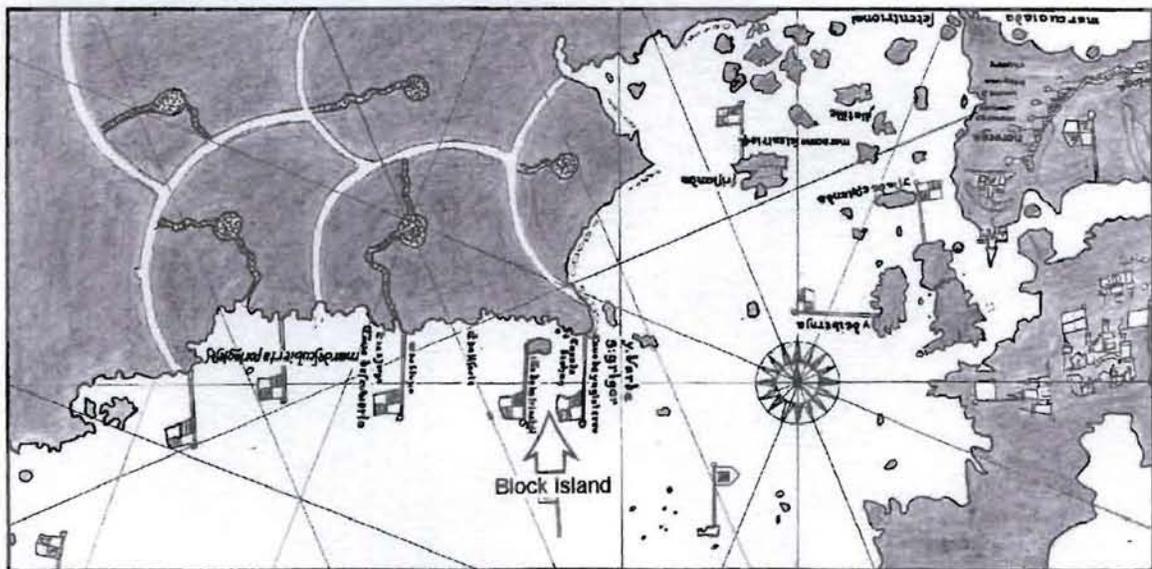


Figure 2. John Cabot's navigational charts on the Juan de la Cosa Map c.1500. Isles Trinity, Grigor, and Verde bracket Narragansett Bay and Cape Cod. Horizontal coastline from Hudson River to Cape Cod features English flags and the declaration: *Mare discubierto por ingleses* – "seas discovered by English."

The only chart showing Cabot's territorial discoveries was prepared by a Spanish cartographer, Juan de la Cosa, in about 1500. This secret copy of Cabot's navigational charts was unavailable to Renaissance geographers outside of Spain – so it played no role in Mercator's decision to place Norombega City beside Narragansett Bay. However, details on the map are sufficient to reveal that Cabot paid considerable attention to plotting the locations of suitable English colonies. One of these was Rhode Island. One of the principal landmarks of this choice colonial property was a little isle of some prominence that is situated slightly east of Long Island. Cabot called it "Trinity." Ever since a Dutch survey in 1614 by Adrian Block, it has been known as "Block Island." In 1524, Spanish Captain Esteván Gomez followed this marker to Narragansett Bay – where he expected to find English settlers. He loaded up his ships with "slaves from both races" (that is, Natives and White People).³

Was Esteván's goal to wipe out evidence of an enduring English colony?

PRIOR STATE OF THE ART

Mercator's Bizarre Capital City on Narragansett Bay

The northeastern section of North America on Mercator's 1569 World Map features the glaring image of a large European City. It has towers, battlements, and a huge entry gate. Mercator identified this mysterious Capital City as "Norombega." The City stands beside an enormous river, the River Grand; and it is situated at the northeast corner of a large bay. The title of the nearby headland is *Cabo de Lagus Islas* (or "Cape of Undeveloped Islands"). This title, when considered in the context of maps produced by the Dieppe School of French Cartography in the 16th century, is sufficient to identify Norombega Bay as being synonymous with the modern-day "Narragansett Bay" of Rhode Island. This inlet has a consistent position on a distinctive horizontal shoreline; and it has a shape that further serves to identify the location of Narragansett Bay on a host of early Renaissance maps.⁴

Mercator's prominent Norombega City might have shared the fate of another very-real Native City that disappeared in Eastern Canada. "Hochelaga" was the Huron-Iroquois fortress of wood planks, longhouses, and lumber palisades that the French explorer Jacques Cartier found along the St. Lawrence River in 1535. We should keep in mind the uncertain legacy of this Native City when we consider the controversial existence of Norombega – which some writers have characterized as being "a complete fiction."

Cartier wrote extensively about the location of Hochelaga, the surrounding fields of cultivated "wheat," and the three thousand inhabitants who occupied the wooden fortress. Hochelaga was still proudly standing when he sailed back to France in 1536. Five years later, when Cartier returned to visit his Huron allies, he discovered to his great surprise and disappointment that the fortress had entirely vanished. In modern times, archaeologists have searched for the "lost City" without any success. Considering that the entire fortress was made from wood, straw, animal skins, and a few nails, it is not at all surprising that Hochelaga has turned to dust. It wasn't the first, nor would it be the last city to disappear along the relentless, encroaching frontier of Colonial development.

Mercator's 1569 Map exercised considerable influence upon European exploration and cartography of North America. Most 16th century cartographers followed his lead in placing Norumbega above Verrazano's distinctive harbor (i.e., Narragansett Bay) on the Grand River. Thousands of copies of this "fantastic geography" were issued under the authorship of Abraham Ortelius (1573), Andre Thevet (1575), Michael Lok (1582), Cornelius Judaeus (1593), Theodore de Bry (1596, Cornelius Wytfliet (1597), and Judocus Hondius (1630).

However, not everyone marched lockstep with Mercator's notion of where the ancient English colony was located. A map by Zaltieri (1566) placed *Tiera de Norumbega* in the Carolinas. Giovanni Camocio's *Norumbega* (1567) wound up in Pennsylvania. Urbano Monti's Map (1598) placed *Norembega* west of the Great Lakes – suggesting the ancient inhabitants were simply fleeing the onrush of European pioneers. A cursory examination of the cartographic record gives the mistaken impression that Norumbega City might have been located anywhere along the Eastern Seaboard.

French explorer Samuel de Champlain searched the coastline from Cape Breton to Cape Cod in 1604 and 1605 without finding "Norumbega City," although there was a Native Tribe by that name that was camped out along the Penobscot River. He concluded that John Dee's "Arthurian Capital" was merely wishful thinking. However, Champlain's search for the "lost city" seems equally deceptive. If we make an in-depth examination of 16th century maps, it becomes evident that the French School of Cartography at Dieppe kept close watch upon the specific region of Narragansett Bay. Evidently, French authorities hoped to acquire prime real estate for a French colony at that precise location.



Figure 3. Mid-section from Giovanni Verrazano's East Coast navigational charts compiled on map by his brother, Girolamo Verrazano, in 1529. Landmark isle, Luisa (or Block Island), sits on a meridian indicating the adjacent location of "the Bay of Refuge" (or Narragansett Bay). Hook pattern of dots marks sandy shallows of Cape Cod. "Oranbega" straddles the

seacoast of Nova Scotia. This title for Queen Margaret's "Norumbega Territory" indicates that the Kalmar Union Colony extended roughly from Nova Scotia in the North to the Carolinas. Verrazano claimed it all for France in 1524.

French Sources for Mercator's Norumbega City on the 1569 Map

A French trading company hired the Florentine navigator Giovanni Verrazano to explore the Western Isles during a hiatus in English voyages to the region. King Henry VIII deferred expeditions proposed by London merchants, because he feared they might offend his Spanish wife. A few years later, he didn't want to compromise his chances of gaining a divorce by alienating the Vatican – as Pope Alexander VI had granted a monopoly over the Western Isles to Spain. When his Catholic daughter, Queen Mary, took the throne, prohibitions against English voyaging to the shores of New Spain were strictly enforced.

Verrazano's instructions for an expedition in 1524 included the usual search for an illusive "strait" leading to the riches of the Orient. He was also expected to make a detailed inventory of tribes, trading practices, and suitable locations for trading posts and colonies. Verrazano's detailed report (in a Letter to King Francis I) and a map in 1529 prepared by his brother, Girolamo, provided an excellent foundation for subsequent French exploration and settlement in North America. Vesconte de Maggiolo compiled a similar map of the Eastern Seaboard from the Carolinas to Labrador in 1527.⁵

Verrazano's Letter noted that the highlight of his voyage was a two-week visit at a harbor he called "the Bay of Refuge." After battling with storms for many days, the Florentine navigator spied the opening to a large bay – the only one he found along the entire length of the 350 km (or 200 mile) horizontal shoreline between the Hudson River and Cape Cod. He identified an offshore isle called "Luisa" (actually Block Island) that provided an excellent landmark for approaching ships. The vast anchorage, temperate climate, shelter from storms, and peaceful Natives made the harbor particularly attractive. He noted many areas were suitable for harvesting lumber, raising crops, and establishing settlements. Verrazano said that some of the People were "inclined towards whiteness." One version of his report indicated that Natives called their territory "Norumbega." However, Girolamo applied the term *oranbega* to a region that was much farther north – perhaps along the coast of Nova Scotia. The Bay of Refuge, he said, was situated at 41°40'N. Girolamo placed *Cabo de Refugio* (and the Bay) at that latitude on his map. As Narragansett Bay is the only harbor that fits Verrazano's description; and it is situated between 41°N and 42°N along the horizontal coastline east of Block Island; we can be confident that this was the site he recommended for establishing a French Colony.⁶

According to a 1535 map by Jean Rotz (at Dieppe), Jacques Cartier (or an "advance team") stopped by the "Bay of Many Isles" (Narragansett Bay) in 1534. He then proceeded on to the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Cartier was back at the "Bay of Many Isles" in 1536 – at which time Battista Agnese (a Genovese cartographer at Venice) indicated the latitude of Narragansett Bay as being the same Parallel as Cape Finisterre, Spain (at 43°N). His map indicates Verrazano's Bay as being the principal meridian of the Eastern Seaboard. All the compass lines on his chart converged upon Narragansett Bay. It is apparent from this map that French authorities (and perhaps Venetians) intended to make this their principal colonial destination in the west.

Contrary to popular opinion, it wasn't Mercator who misnamed the Colonial City. A map by Nicholas Desliens (at Dieppe) in 1541 identified the Territory of *Anoranbegue* beside Narragansett Bay. The Harleen Map from the Dieppe School in 1542 confirmed that the name of the territory was *Anorabagia*. Gian Ramusio's book, *Viaggi* (or "the Voyages") in 1555, included a translation of Verrazano's Letter to the King of France. The Venetian spelling given by Ramusio was "Norombega."

A travel itinerary called *Inventio Fortunatae* was completed by English Franciscans in about 1360. This widely-circulated manuscript indicated that remains of European dwellings and ships were found in the forested magnetic regions of a Western Province called "North Norway." During the 14th century, the convergent point of the Magnetic North Pole was situated someplace between Labrador and Foxe Basin north of Hudson Bay. A Dutch journalist, Jacob Cnoyen, reported in 1364 that pilgrims had come to Trondheim, Norway, from King Arthur's Colony in the Far West. All of these details were sufficient evidence for Mercator to designate "Norombega" on Narragansett Bay as the location of King Arthur's Capital City in the New World.⁷

NEW STATE OF THE ART REVELATIONS

Cape Cod & Narragansett Bay on the Ruysch Map of 1507

A conical projection showing the North Atlantic was published as part of a Ptolemaic *Geographica* at Rome in 1507. The Johann Ruysch Map includes an early survey of New World coastlines between the modern-day Hudson River and Cape Cod. According to longstanding traditions in cartographical history, this region of the "horizontal coastline" was not effectively mapped until Henry Hudson, Adrian Block, and Hendrich Christiansz explored the region for the Dutch East India Company between 1609 and 1614. However, the Ruysch Map is incredibly accurate with its portrayal of Cape Cod and the adjacent coastline showing Buzzard's Bay and Narragansett Bay to the west.⁸

Evidently, somebody made a detailed exploration and mapping of the area at an earlier date. Who could it have been?

Text on the Ruysch Map indicates that the Flemish cartographer visited the East Coast of North America – although there is no indication that he participated in any sort of surveying or mapping in the field. The implication is that the map of Cape Cod and Narragansett Bay was already completed by an earlier draftsman; and the voyage west was primarily intended to pin-down the accurate longitude. According to the text by Marco Beneventanus, Johann Ruysch sailed on an English ship from the Port of Bristol. They followed a latitude course west of Ireland – along the parallel of 53°N.⁹ This course should have taken the vessel right to the shores of Labrador near Belle Isle. However, for reasons we will consider in a moment, the ship actually wound up at a point almost ten degrees farther south (that is, along the shores of Cape Cod).

A five-to-ten degree error of latitude measurement was not uncommon in early 16th century maps. Martin Waldseemüller's 1507 World Map placed Cuba above the Tropic of Cancer – when the actual position should have been farther south by about five-degrees. On the Ruysch Map, Hispaniola was placed at about 30°N when the actual latitude is about 20°N. With respect to longitude – which was difficult to estimate without simultaneous eclipse observations – the error for the distance from England to

Cape Cod on the Ruysch Map was only ten-degrees; whereas the error from England to Newfoundland would have been twenty-five degrees. In other words, with respect to longitude and latitude measurements, Cape Cod is a much better match than the Newfoundland Archipelago with respect to the Ruysch Map.

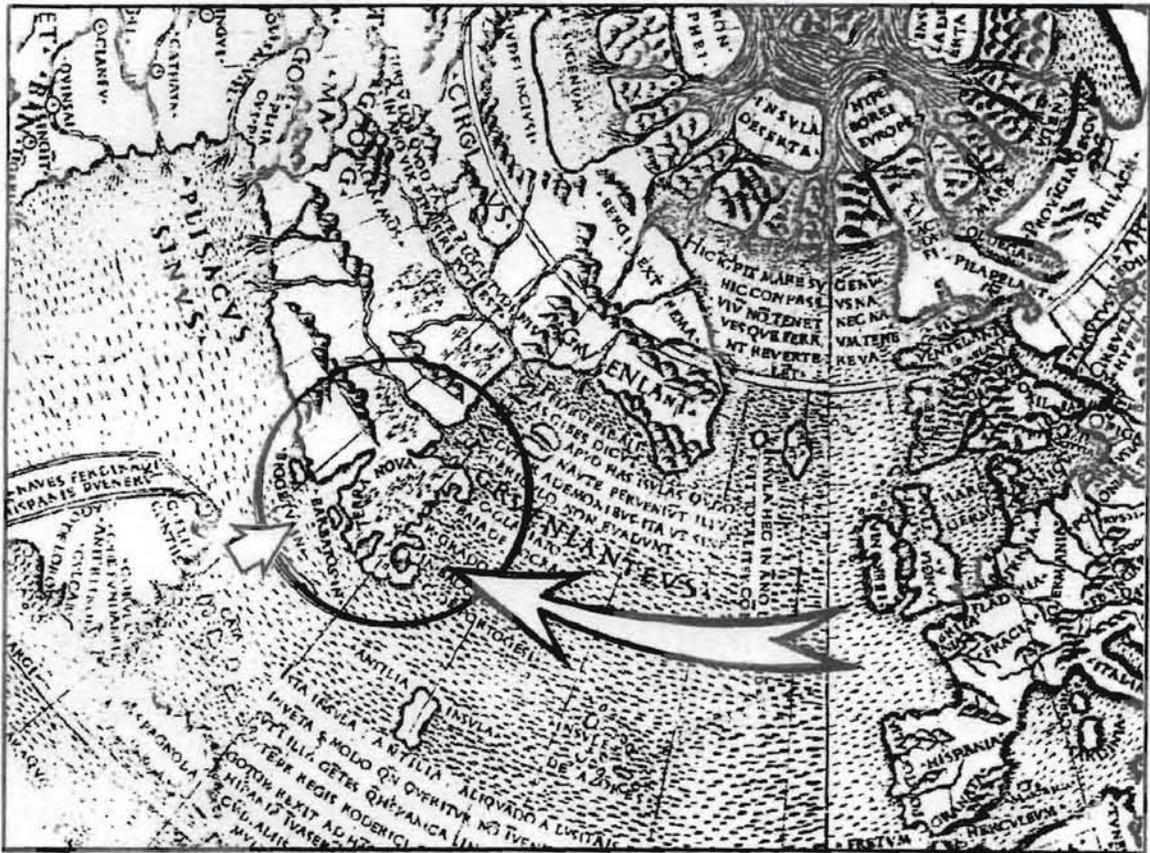


Figure 4. Northwest Section from Johann Ruysch Map of 1507 shows location of *Cabo de Portuguesi* (“Portuguese Cape,” or Cape Cod) and *Terra Nova* (or “New Land”). Adjacent inlets to the west represent Buzzard’s Bay and Narragansett Bay. Large Arrow shows approximate route of ships sailing west on a “latitude course” directly to the New England Seacoast. This is the area where Prince Henry Sinclair resettled farmers from the abandoned “Eastern Settlement” of Greenland between 1365 and 1400. Evidently, the survey upon which this part of the Ruysch Map was based was completed during that time.

Most historians assume that Newfoundland was the objective of the Ruysch Expedition due to terminology used on the map.¹⁰ These terms include *Terra Nova* (a general reference to “New Land”) and *Insula Baccalauras* (“Isle of Codfish”) which typically referred to Newfoundland. However, the term could have been used anywhere along the New England coastline. Newfoundland is an archipelago of islands situated between the opposing headlands of Labrador and Cape Breton which border the Gulf of St. Lawrence. By contrast, *Terra Nova* on the Ruysch Map is part of the continental

mainland. The Map does not actually portray an archipelago of islands anywhere along the coast; although in the approximate location of Newfoundland, we see an iconic island with a split down the middle. The caption says *Ademonicus* (“Demon Isle”) suggesting the presence of pirates.

The headland of Cape Cod on the Ruysch Map is situated at the southeastern corner of a right-angle bend along the continental shoreline. This is an accurate depiction of the actual Cape Cod shoreline that we see reflected in modern maps and in transitional charts prepared by Dutch and English cartographers during the 17th century. Directly south of Cape Cod, for hundreds of kilometers, there is an open ocean for a considerable distance; whereas, south of Newfoundland, sailors encounter hundreds of kilometers of mainland along the Eastern Seaboard. In other words, the general depiction of the coastline is consistent with Cape Cod, Narragansett Bay, and the “horizontal coast” heading west to the Hudson River.

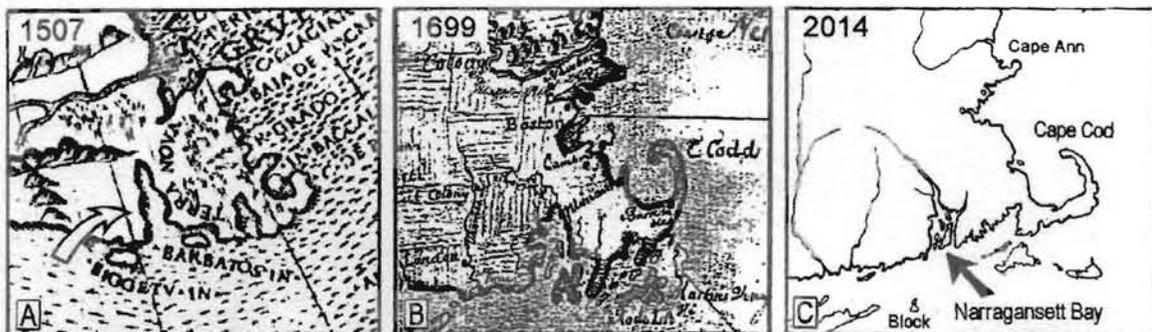


Figure 5. Comparison of sectional maps shows high proportional similarity and exact sequence of Diagnostic Geographical Markers. A--Ruysch; B--1699 English Map; C--modern map. Greater similarity of Ruysch coastline to transitional map resulted from use of similar mapping technology. Changes to coastlines might have resulted from erosion or shifting magnetic force lines used in compass mapping.

A comparative assessment of the sequence of Diagnostic Geographical Markers (DGMs) on the Ruysch Map, a transitional English chart from 1699, and a modern map indicates an incredibly high level of congruence (i.e., 100%):

1. Northern River flowing east: representing the Merrimack River;
2. Eastward projecting cape: representing Cape Ann;
3. Indented east coast at the point of Boston Harbor;
4. Northern hook-cape (seen on the 1699 map; now reduced to Manomet Point);
5. Southeastern Hook-shaped cape and bay: Cape Cod;
6. Short western bay opening to the south: Buzzard’s Bay west of Cape Cod;
7. Offshore islands (Rhode Island, Martha’s Vineyard or Nantucket);
8. Long triangular-shaped bay narrowing towards the north, open to south;
9. Horizontal east-west coastline from Cape Cod to Hudson River; and
10. Three major rivers flowing south between Narragansett Bay and Hudson River.

The Ruysch Map has more in common with the transitional English Map of 1699 than it does with a modern map. This is a consequence of greater similarity of mapping technology, similarities in survey equipment, and subsequent changes in physical geography resulting from erosion. The consistent and proportional features of all three maps indicate that measurements on land contributed substantially to the uniform layout of geographical features on the Ruysch Map.

Who made the earliest Cape Cod to Narragansett Bay Map?

Naturally, an assessment of events that occurred at least five centuries ago is somewhat preliminary and speculative; and it is subject to further investigation and revision. But we have some promising clues.

The Ruysch Map was published in Rome. In all likelihood, Mercator saw a copy of this map; and he must have noticed the similarities of the horizontal, east-west shoreline and the triangular “Bay of Isles” that was featured on maps from the Dieppe School and Venice. He was therefore cognizant of the fact that the bay was known to ancient mariners long before the French expressed an interest in establishing a colony. Text on Mercator’s 1569 Map indicated that his sources for geographical details in the Northern Regions included a Dutch traveler, James Cnoyen, who visited the King’s Court in Norway where he interviewed a priest from the Arthurian Colony in the Far West. His own map of Norombega Bay shows a higher degree of accuracy with respect to the shoreline of Narragansett Bay than does any other Dutch map for the next century; so it is evident that he obtained a navigational chart that is otherwise unknown to historians.

Mercator was certainly aware of a popular manuscript by an anonymous Spanish Franciscan who reported visiting a Celtic Colony in the Far West. He said that Natives called the forested land *Ibernia* – whereas the Old Ireland near England was identified as *Irlanda*.¹¹ His book, *el Libro de Conocimientos* (or “the Book of Knowledge,” c.1350) noted that the land was under the sovereignty of the King of Norway. Thus, Celtic residents paid taxes to a Norwegian King. The friar even included an illustration of the flag that was flown over the trading-post; and he noted that it was identical to the King’s Royal Norse Banner – a black lion rampant on a gold field.¹²

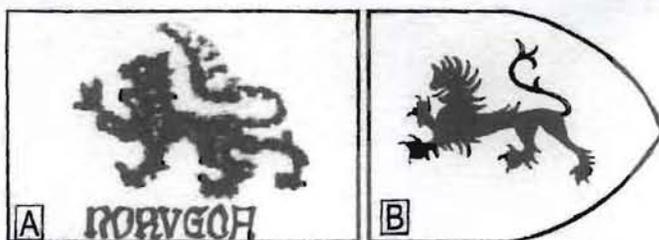


Figure 6. Flags confirm Norse presence in Western *Ibernia* (or “Great Ireland”). A – Norway Flag on Angelino Dulcert Map (1339); B – Royal Lion Banner at Celtic trading post, from *el Libro de Conocimientos* (“Book of Knowledge,” c.1350).

Probably, the Celtic Colony was one of many mixed enclaves of Natives and European immigrants – Welsh, Portuguese, Basque, Irish, and Scots – who came under the jurisdiction of Norway when King Haakon IV proclaimed sovereignty in 1261. This

proclamation included a region called *Landanu* (a.k.a. *Terra Nova* or “New Land”). A network of trading-posts established by Icelandic barons provided brokerage and transport services for lumber, whale oil, furs, and codfish that were shipped across the North Atlantic to ports in Northern Europe. A caption placed beside Labrador and Newfoundland on the Contarini Map (Venice, 1506) noted that: *Hanc terram invenerenav telusita Nor Rex Regis* (that is, “this land discovered and claimed by navigators of the King of Norway”).¹³

John Gade (1951) noted that German cogs in the Hanseatic League often carried salt for processing fish on their westward voyages to Iceland. It was a simple matter for them to sail west on a latitude course to the rich fishing grounds of Newfoundland. These were identified by such names as “Icelandic Isles,” “Markland,” and “Vinland.” After catching and processing codfish, the Hansa merchants brought their valuable cargos directly back to North European ports. According to Nordic-Hanseatic Treaties, captains were supposed to pay duties on imported cargoes at Bergen. However, trade agreements were impossible to enforce, because the Hanseatic League controlled virtually all the shipping between Iceland, North Norway (Landanu), Nordland (along the Lofoten Coast), Bergen, and Northern Europe by 1300.¹⁴

During the mid-1300s, King Haakon VI of Norway and King Valdemar IV of Denmark rebelled against the economic and political domination that had been established by the Hanseatic League. They failed in their efforts. However Queen Margaret of the Kalmar Union managed to establish a unified Scandinavian Alliance in 1397. The Queen’s councilors were responsible for building up the Royal Navy and reestablishing economic control over the Western Dominions. They had a strong motive for acquiring the new variety of *portolan* maps that were being used by merchants who engaged in maritime and transatlantic commerce. It was probably about at this point in time that Kalmar planners arranged with allies in Bristol, Portugal, and Venice to conduct a practical navigational survey of the Territory called “North Norway.” Evidence of this survey has emerged in the Ruysch Map, the Contarini Map, and a map by the Venetian cartographer, Albertin di Virga in about 1414.

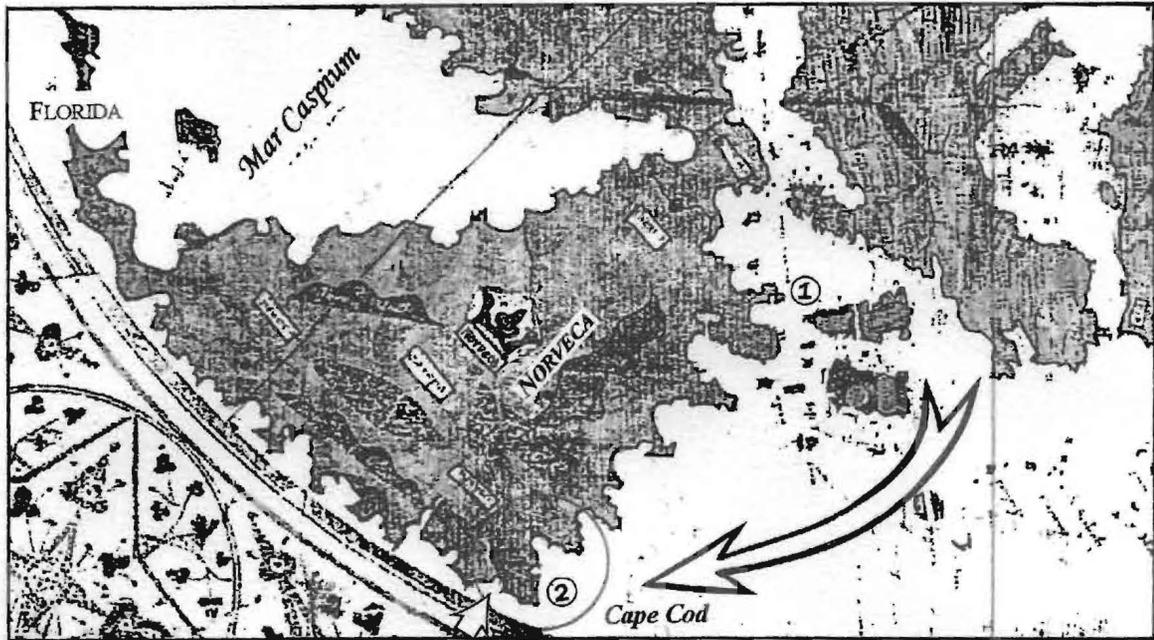


Figure 7. Continent of North Norway (or *Norveca*) from Northwest Quadrant on the Albertin di Virga Map (Venice, c.1414). Narrow peninsula north of England (1) represents Greenland. Circle encompasses Cape Cod (2) and Narragansett Bay (small arrow). Large arrow depicts approximate “latitude course” for ships sailing west of England directly across the Atlantic Ocean.

The DiVirga Map includes an early Venetian survey of coastline along *Norveca Province* (that is, Nordic Territories from Greenland to Florida). The odd placement of Florida and *Mare Caspium* (“Gulf of Mexico”) northeast of England was an experiment during the early days of *portolan* mapping in the 14th and 15th centuries.¹⁵

Arctic Greenland appears as a small peninsula directly north of England.¹⁶ The right-angle bend of the North American coastline at 42°N (Cape Cod) and the horizontal east-west coastline leading towards the Hudson River were indicated northwest of England. Keep in mind: this was a planning document that was intended for managing far-flung trading posts. It was never published; thus, new knowledge regarding overseas geography was never made available to persons outside the English-Dutch-Venetian team that was responsible for conducting the field survey. These lands were presumed to belong to the Kalmar sovereign by virtue of King Haakon IV’s Declaration of Sovereignty in 1261. They certainly didn’t represent territories that were conquered, occupied, or settled by Scandinavians prior to 1365. The survey nature of the map is indicated by the serrated edges along the coastline. Points of observations, made by compass and astrolabe measurements, were connected by schematic arcs that were used to connect the dots.

Kalmar Union planners intended to establish a Capital City at an ideal location in order to manage the economic and religious needs of settlements in *Landamu* (the New Land) along America’s Eastern Seaboard. The place that was selected was Narragansett Bay. Scandinavian settlers consisted mostly of farmers who were transported out of

Greenland. Scandinavian immigrants established a trading “city” with log houses and stone foundations right about where Norombega was indicated on Mercator’s Map. They came from the “Eastern Settlement” on Greenland. Between 1365 and 1410, these folks assembled at the embarkation center of Hvalsey; they loaded their livestock and belongings on large transport ships, and they sailed south to warmer pastures in Labrador, Newfoundland, and modern-day New England. The same Norman-Scottish sailors who built the distinctive Hvalsey Church and Newport Tower probably provided the ferry service in return for a portion of future earnings. Queen Margaret (1376-1412) or King Eric VII (1397-1439) might have demanded a precise survey of the New England Region that later appeared on the map by Johann Ruysch. The Gulf of St. Lawrence was rejected as the site for a colony, because every winter it was shut off from commerce by a pavement of ice.

Ruysch probably obtained a copy of the map that Kalmar administrators provided to their commercial allies at Bristol in about 1400. Pirate wars, native uprisings, epidemic diseases, and the changing fortunes of maritime powers prevented the Kalmar Union from achieving the goals of the visionary Queen. By the time Ruysch obtained his map from associates in Bristol, probably nobody knew where it came from or what it meant. Even though it was printed in Rome and widely distributed, the advanced Venetian geography never attracted the interest of geographers – thus it passed virtually unnoticed into a cartographical oblivion reserved for out-of-date maps.

That is not to say Queen Margaret’s vision was futile. Presence of Nordic traders in the New England Region certainly aided English and Dutch settlers during the 17th century. New immigrants found friendly residents who understood their language and who were eager to trade stockfish and furs for vitally-needed iron and cloth.

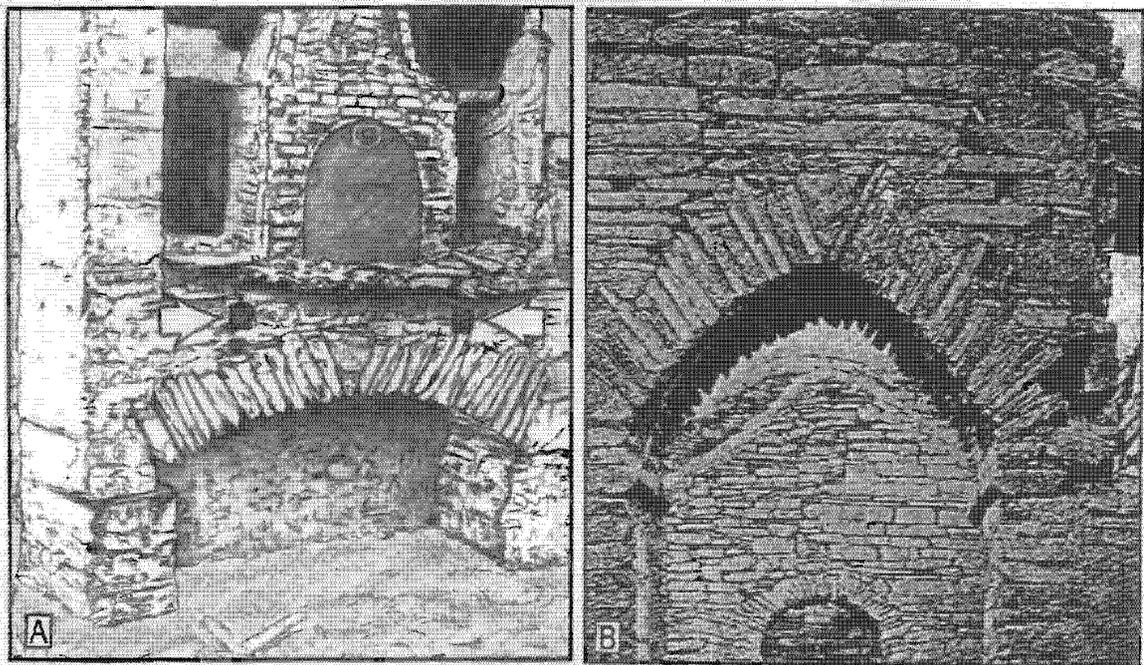


Figure 8. A hallmark of medieval Scottish masons, the eclectic accordion arch with triangular keystone is seen in ruins at Newport, RI, circa 1400

beneath later Colonial fireplace (A) and at 13th century Eynhallow Church in the Orkney Isles (B). Vents above medieval arch (arrows, A) indicate that the foundation arch was used as a kiln for producing lime mortar. Sketch of photograph (A) is based on a document from the Newport Historical Society. It shows the hybrid medieval-colonial structure as seen on photo taken during demolition in 1898. Orkney photo is from John Mooney, *Eynhallow – The Holy Island*, 1923.

During the course of the present study, researchers identified the remains of two medieval foundations that were built at Newport along a waterfront street. A medieval “temple-church” is still standing in Touro Park. These buildings were constructed by masons using an eclectic style of masonry that was common in Norman-Scottish and Irish buildings during the 13th and 14th centuries. A cluster of three fireplace structures in the foundation of the Sueton Grant House on Thames Street consisted of eclectic fanlike or accordion archways with peculiar keystones that were in the shape of triangles. This type of masonry was otherwise unknown in Colonial North America; but it was fairly common in Scotland, the Western Scottish Isles, the Orkneys, and Ireland. One example of the triangular keystone has been identified at ruins of the 14th century Hvalsey Church in Greenland.¹⁷

The Grant House was a Colonial structure that was built on top of an earlier, medieval lime-kiln foundation. According to Norman Isham (1895) it was not uncommon for Colonial settlers to build wood-plank houses on top of abandoned foundations.¹⁸ Thus, we can see in a photograph of the Grant House demolition in 1898 the typical style of Colonial construction that was built on top of a previously-existing medieval lime-kiln. The Colonial structure consists of oak beams, standardized bricks, and perfectly-curved Roman arches.¹⁹

While the Scandinavian presence in ancient America did not have the forceful impact that was achieved by Spanish colonization of Latin America, it established a commercial corridor that brought enormous amounts of salted cod, furs, and lumber into Northern Europe. During the 14th and 15th centuries, most of this produce was carried on ships belonging to the Hanseatic League. Gradually, English and Dutch merchants took over the hauling of New World cargoes. Descendants of immigrants and traders who survived to witness the arrival of 17th century Dutch, French, and English settlers must have served as a “cultural bridgehead” that helped sustain new arrivals in the wilderness continent they found across the seas.

Supplemental Illustrations



Figure 9. Huge peninsula of headlands (Labrador to Cape Cod) projects from Asia into the Atlantic Ocean on the Contarini Map (Venice, 1506). Caption indicates: “Land discovered and claimed by navigators for the King of Norway.” (Translation by Balkans & Italian historian Victor DeMattei.)

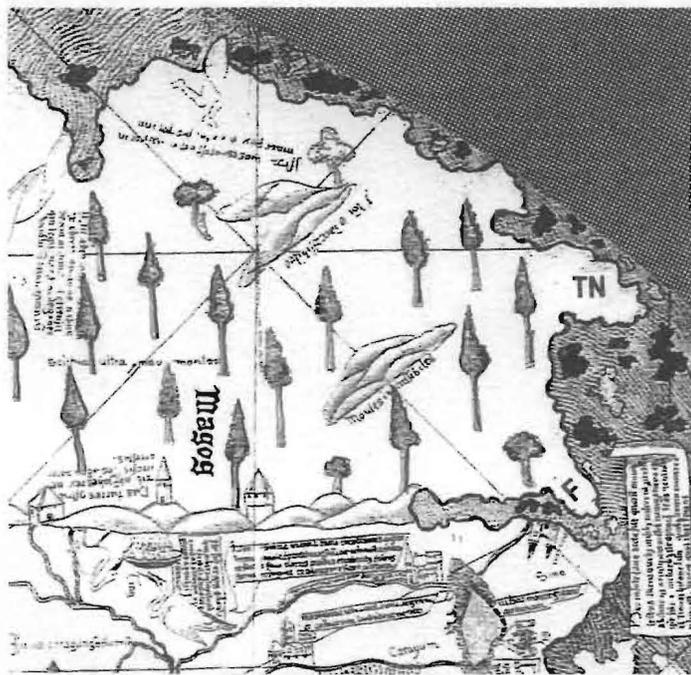


Figure 10. Northeast Section from the Genoese Map of 1457 portrays forest wilderness and eastward-projecting peninsulas. (TN) Terra Nova; (F)

Florida. The forest wilderness along the Eastern Seaboard was known as “Markland” in the Icelandic sagas. This region, which appears directly west of England, Ireland, Spain, and Portugal, was evidently known as a cheap source of lumber during the 14th century. Projecting forested headlands on mainland that was generally presumed to be part of Asia is also evident on the Di Virga Map (1414), the Contarini Map (1506), and the Ruysch Map (1507). The Cantino Map (1502) and Waldseemuller’s 1518 “Carta Marina” both indicate that Newfoundland was a huge isle of forests. An entry in the Icelandic Annals for 1347 indicates that a lumber ship from Markland and Greenland was shipwrecked along the coast. Vatican reports about Greenland being “a land of forests” in the 15th century probably reflect the common naming of America’s Eastern Seaboard as being “the Green Land.” Immigration of refugees from Arctic Greenland to new homes along the Eastern Seaboard probably played a role in the renaming of Terra Nova or Landanu as “Green Land.”



Figure 11. *Norbagia* (“Norway” – N) and *Engronelant* Peninsula (“Greenland” – G) on the Contarini Map (Venice, 1506). Traditional 14th–15th century maps showed Greenland as a peninsula located north of Norway. Norway extended no farther west than directly north of England. DiVirga’s c.1414 portrayal of a huge northwest continent (Norveca) represents addition of newly-discovered mainland.



Figure 12. Hansa *Rudimentum Novitiorum* Map. Spelling on a map published at Lübeck (1475) was *Vinlād*. The Paris Map version (1488) was *Winklād*. This map confirms that German merchants were actively engaged in commerce with America's Eastern Seaboard – importing dried codfish, lumber, furs, etc. It was a common map throughout Northern Europe – attesting to widespread awareness of the northwestern location of overseas colonies before Columbus.

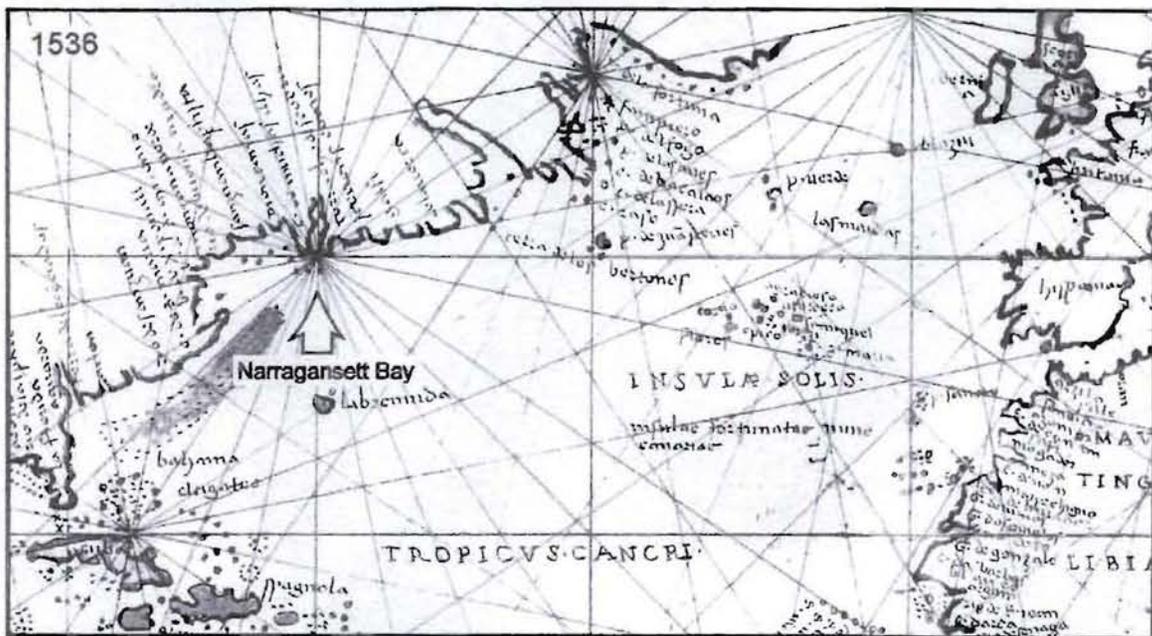


Figure 13. Map by Genovese-Venetian Battista Agnese (1536) portrays Narragansett Bay (beside “Cabo de Muchas Islas”) as the focus of compass

lines as well as both a prime meridian and a prime latitude in the west (arrow). This map places the mouth of the Bay at the same latitude as Cape Finisterre, Spain (at 43°N). This is very close to the actual latitude of Narragansett Bay at 41°30'N. It is evident from this map that mariners from Genoa and Venice were well-aware of the prime location of the Western Hub of Commerce.

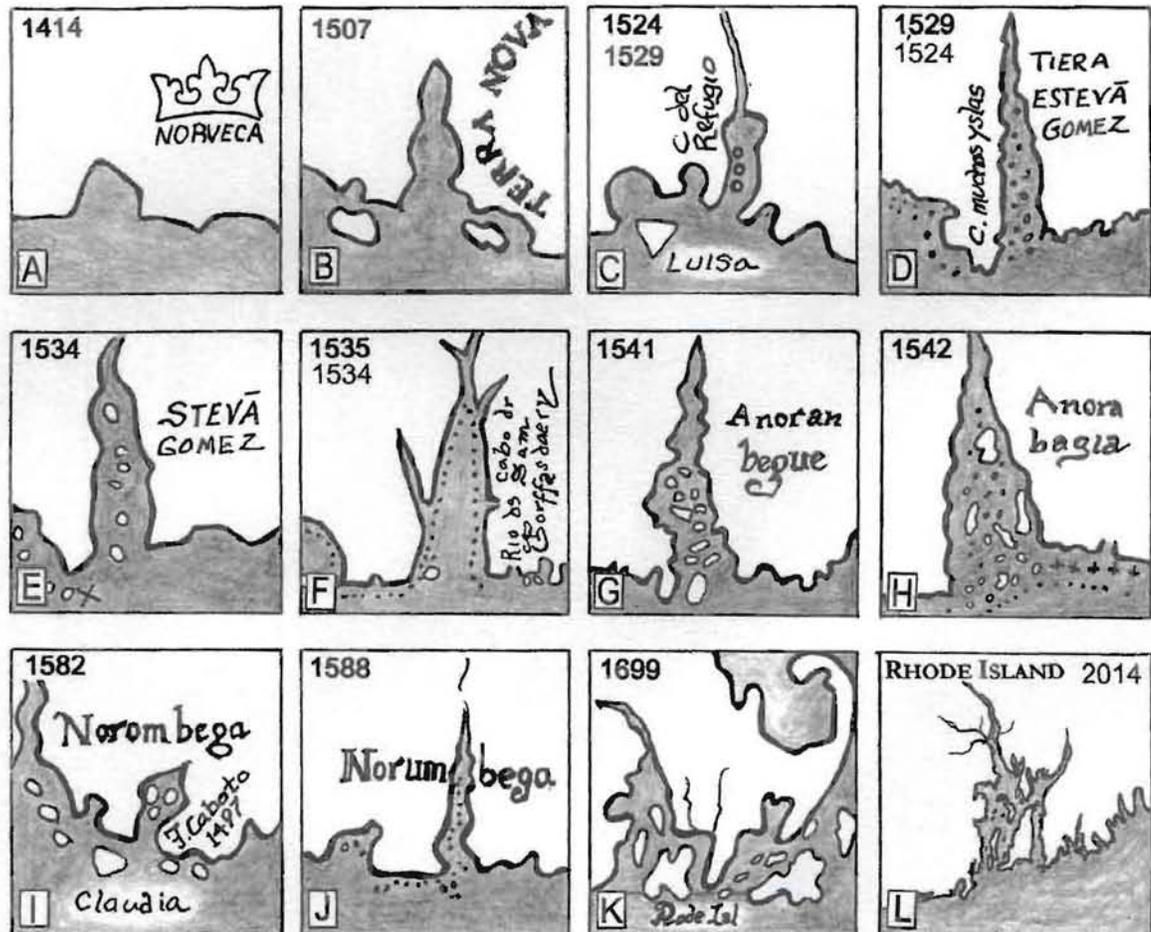


Figure 14. Summary Table shows Maps of Narragansett Bay (not all-inclusive). These maps confirm widespread knowledge regarding the Western Harbor.

- | | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| A. Di Virga, 1414
Venice | B. Ruysch, 1507
Bristol, Holland | C. Verrazano, 1529
Dieppe, France | D. Ribiero, 1529
Spain |
| E. Ribiero, 1534
"Harleen Map," 1542
Spain, Venice | F. Cartier, Rotz, 1535
Dieppe, France | G. Desliens, 1541
Dieppe, France | H.
Dieppe, |

I. Lok, 1582
Map, 2014
England

J. Boazio, 1588
England

K. Colonial, 1699
Holland, England

L. Modern
Hammond Atlas

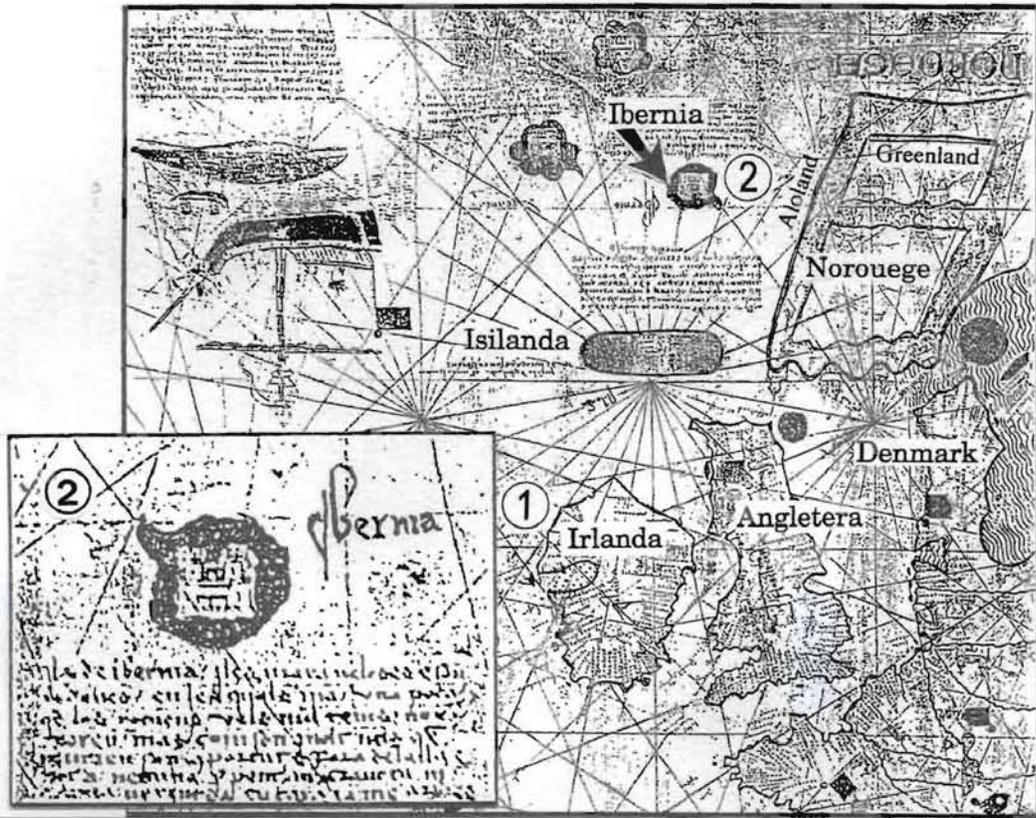


Figure 15. Mecia Viladestes Map (1413) shows Great Ireland called “Ibernia” north of Isilanda and Irlanda (the traditional Ireland).

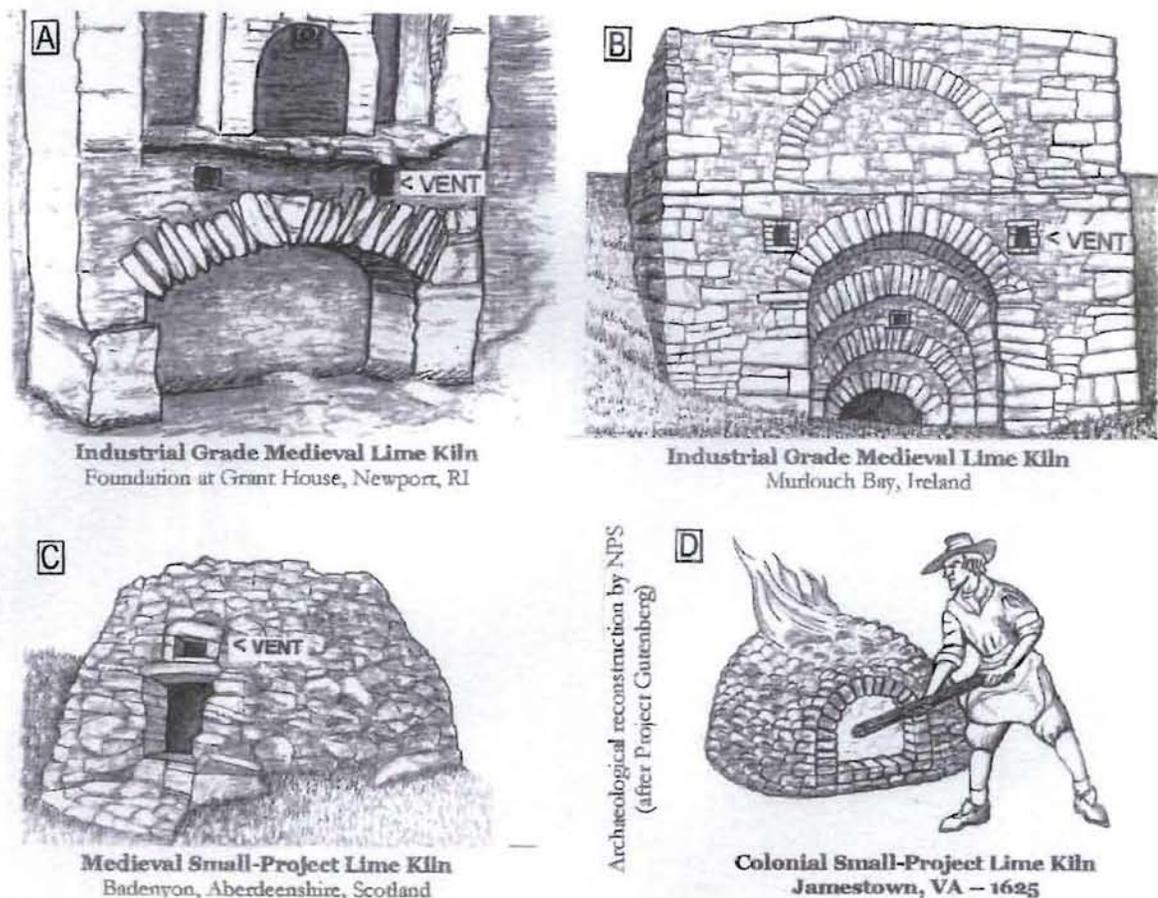


Figure 16. Limekilns with vents were common in medieval Scotland (as at Aberdeen, C) and in Ireland (Murloch Bay, B). Such vents are generally absent in the Colonial limekilns of New England. Presence of vents above fire chamber vaults in the Sueton Grant House foundation (at Newport, Rhode Island) confirm that the Colonial Grant House (built c.1650) was constructed on top of a prior medieval structure that was originally used (c.1400) as a limekiln. The three-chambered medieval kiln, whose mortar and eclectic masonry style are identical to those of the Old Stone Tower, probably was used to produce several tons of oyster-shell lime cement that was needed to build the circular Stone Tower in the 14th century. The Tower was built of beach stones, fieldstones, and quarry stones weighing an estimated thirty-to-forty tons. Substantial foundation stones were placed “out of sight” beneath the medieval structure.

This article was offered to a major professional journal concerning the History of Cartography. However, the editor declined the proposed article because he said it lacked sufficient “registered scholarship.” In other words, academic scholars routinely screen out anything that hasn’t already been approved and “registered” as being in conformity with preexisting academic beliefs. Certainly, articles about *new evidence* and *controversial subjects* (like King Arthur’s Colony) will always lack approved “registered references.”



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NOTES

Vertical text on the left margin, likely a page number or reference marker.



- ¹ Arthur Newton, *The Great Age of Discovery*, Freeport: Books for Libraries, 1932, p.141.
- ² Ian Wilson, *The Columbus Myth—Did Men from Bristol Reach America before Columbus?* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991, p.145, suggests that the La Cosa Map (c.1500) indicates that Bristol merchants made prior voyages to the horizontal coast of Rhode Island.
- ³ Newton (1932) *ibid*, p.172.
- ⁴ Nine maps produced by the Dieppe School have minor variations in adjacent coastlines or geographical positions. Consistent titles, such as “Bay of Many Isles,” or “Anorumbega,” and consistent triangular shapes identify the only major, south-opening bay on the east-west horizontal coastline between Cape Cod and the Hudson River. In 1536, a map by Battista Agnese placed the mouth of the bay at the latitude of Cape Finisterre, Spain – 43°N. This is sufficiently close to the latitude of Narragansett Bay (41°30’N) to identify Rhode Island as the site of Mercator’s Norombega City.
- ⁵ Gian Ramusio, The Relation of John Verarzanus, *Viaggi*, Vol. III, 1565. An accessible translation can be found in R.H. Major, *The Voyages of Nicolò and Antonio Zeno to the Northern Seas in the XIVth Century*, London: Hakluyt Society (Vol.50), 1873.
- ⁶ There are at least 25 different spellings of *Norombaga* in assorted maps and chronicles. The term might be from an Algonquian word meaning “still water,” from *Norbagia* (meaning Norway), or from convergent usages in Native and colonial speech.
- ⁷ Letters exchanged between Mercator and John Dee in 1577 mentioned evidence of forests and magnetic regions in the Far West mentioned the *Inventio Fortunatae*. Newton (1932, *ibid*, p.199-207).
- ⁸ Leslie Trager, “Mysterious Mapmakers: Exploring the Impossibility of Accurate 16th century Maps of Antarctica and Greenland,” at www.newyorkmapsociety.org/FEATURES/TRAGER.HTM (2007), accessed August 2014. There is no question that Dutch and Venetian maps sometimes include remarkably accurate details that have not been explained by cartographic historians. It is possible that Nicolo Polo’s expedition to the Orient (1256-1295) brought back sophisticated mapping technology.
- ⁹ Edgar Klemp, *America in Maps Dating from 1500-1856*, London: Holmes & Meier, 1976.
- ¹⁰ Raymonde Litalien, Jean-François Palomino, and Denis Vaugeois, *Mapping a Continent: Historical Atlas of North America 1492—1814*, McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007, p.25. Authors suggest that *Terra Nova* on the Ruysch Map represented Newfoundland.
- ¹¹ The concept of Two Irelands is reflected in the Mecia Viladestes Map (1413) that placed *Irlanda* directly west of England and *Ibernia* (or “Great Ireland”) to the far Northwest across the ocean.
- ¹² Clements Markham, *The Book of Knowledge*, London: Hakluyt Society, 1912.
- ¹³ Translation by Balkans historian Victor DeMattei.
- ¹⁴ John A. Gade, *The Hanseatic Control of Norwegian Commerce During the Late Middle Ages*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1951, pp. 46-7, 54-5, 63. Hansa shipments of “North Norwegian lumber” were reported in English customs accounts; but they were never entered at the Bergen Kontor (p.60).
- ¹⁵ Arthur Dürst, Weltkarte von Albertin de Virga von 1411 oder 1415, *Carographica Helvetica*, January 1996 (No.13), 18-21.
- ¹⁶ The narrow peninsular nature of Greenland was introduced following a Genovese survey in about 1350 and the subsequent portrayal as such on the Medici Atlas maps. However, Mercator relied upon an older survey that accurately showed Arctic Greenland as an island.
- ¹⁷ Architectural historians have identified the Hvalsey Church as a Scottish structure on the basis of the traditional Scottish eclectic arch, splayed windows, and meter-thick walls that were otherwise unknown in Iceland or Greenland. See www.wikipedia.com/wiki/Hvalsey_Church – accessed December 2014.
- ¹⁸ Norman M. Isham and Albert F. Brown, *Early Rhode Island Houses*, Providence: Preston & Rounds, 1895; pp.17, 24, 30.
- ¹⁹ Jennifer Robinson assisted in examination of the photographic archives at the Newport Historical Society. Only two examples of buildings having medieval arches were found in a collection numbering several thousand items. Clearly, this style of building was not Colonial. This Norse-

Scottish style was intrusive in the 14th century.

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